

anxious to afford as many subscribers as possible the benefits of the automatic system, it is not at present expedient, on account of the cost and the radical alterations necessary, to convert to automatic working those exchanges that are still capable of giving efficient service.

INTER-ISLAND TELEPHONE COMMUNICATION.

It is the intention to extend the facilities for inter-Island telephone communication. A special trunk telephone circuit is now in the course of erection between Christchurch and Seddon, and special telephone repeating-apparatus is to be installed at Seddon and Wellington. The completion of these works will considerably enlarge the area of inter-Island communication. Direct communication will be possible between Christchurch on the one hand, and Auckland, Napier, Wanganui, and Wellington on the other. In addition, subscribers in the Nelson and Marlborough Provinces will be afforded direct communication with many of the principal exchanges in the North Island. The apparatus for repeating speech will prove a great boon, and will enable subscribers in different Islands to hear one another as well as if they were conversing in the same town.

TARIFF FOR TRUNK-LINE CALLS.

A concession has been given in the tariff for toll communications by permitting half rates to operate from 8 p.m. Formerly half rates operated from 9 p.m. It has also been found possible to reduce the rates for long-distance calls beyond 150 miles. This reduction will be of special benefit over such distances as between Auckland and Christchurch.

PUBLIC CALL OFFICES.

Associated with the general increase in telephone-exchange subscribers has been an increased demand for public call offices. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to grant all the applications that have been received, but installations have been made where the need was considered to be most pressing.

It has been decided to adopt more permanent and enduring types of cabinet, and in future the construction will be of concrete, steel, or wood, according to the particular location.

The revenue derived from public call offices shows a considerable increase over that for the previous year.

DUPLICATION OF PACIFIC CABLE.

The scheme of the Pacific Cable Board to provide a second cable channel between Canada and New Zealand and Australia was brought to fruition on the 22nd November, 1926, when the duplicated cable between Suva (Fiji) and Bamfield (British Columbia) was opened for traffic. It is expected that the provision of this second outlet will relieve the congestion that has been in evidence for many years on the single cable channel across the Pacific.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION OF PACIFIC CABLE BOARD.

The constitution of the Pacific Cable Board came under discussion at the Imperial Conference last year, when the representatives of the Governments concerned agreed upon a scheme for a more equitable basis of representation on the Board. Tentative proposals also were made for a definite allocation to the associated Governments of profits from the undertaking, after setting aside a reasonable amount to a reserve fund. It is expected that the amendment of the Pacific Cable Act in these directions by the British Parliament will tend to remove any obstacles to the smooth and efficacious administration of the business of the Board.